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THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

9 July 1963

MEMORANDUM FOR THE STANDING GROUP OF THE NATIONAL
SECURITY COUNCIL

SUBJECT: Cuban Attacks on Reconnaissance Flights -- Contingency
Plan (submitted 28 May 1963)

1. The Joint Chiefs of Staff have reviewed this plan, and offer
the general and specific comments and recommendations set forth below.

2. General

a. The proposals in the plan are considered only a segment
of the spectrum of possible provocative measures that could be
taken to incite the Castro-Communist regime to take actions which
would justify U.S. reprisals aimed at the elimination of the Castro
regime. It is understood that other provocative measures may be
considered which would provide an equally just and credible frame-
work for overt military action on the part of the U.S. to achieve
the same end result.

b. It must be recognized as probable that there would be a
requirement for CINCLANT Op Plans 312 and 316 to insure the
elimination of the Castro-Communist regime.

3. Specific

a. Subparagraphs 2d, 4a, and 7b(1); the Joint Chiefs of Staff
disagree with these provisions for medium altitude overflights.
They consider that the military feasibility of such flights is a
matter which should be evaluated at the time.

b. Subparagraph 3a: while the Joint Chiefs of Staff agree
that response to Cuban provocation is the "most feasible" means
of action, they would not rule out unilateral actions without
provocation should circumstances so indicate.

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c. Subparagraph 4a: the Joint Chiefs of Staff recommend that this paragraph be revised to indicate timing, i. e., how soon after the incident occurs the actions described in subparagraph 4a are to be taken. (Comments 3a and 3f of this memorandum also apply.)

d. Subparagraph 4c: the parenthetical phrase "(DEFCON 3 for SAC)" should be deleted, as all U.S. forces would be placed in appropriate states of readiness.

e. Subparagraphs 6b(5) and 6c(2): in connection with these subparagraphs, the Joint Chiefs of Staff consider that the paper should be expanded to include consideration of the possibility of building up in advance a potential for revolt within Cuba.

f. Subparagraph 6c(1): the Joint Chiefs of Staff disagree with the provisions for intensification of reconnaissance as a provocative measure as contemplated in this subparagraph. In this connection, the exclusive use of reconnaissance flights to this end is not considered the optimum use of this resource. Other methods of provocation, involving aerial (e.g., armed flights flown under the facade of "reconnaissance") and perhaps other operations, which do not unduly place into jeopardy American lives and highly classified equipment, should be considered. Reconnaissance should be intensified only if such flights can be justified by operational requirements for military intelligence.

g. Subparagraphs 7b(1) and (2): the Joint Chiefs of Staff consider that these subparagraphs should be clarified to indicate whether the actions contemplated are intended to be taken before an incident occurs or at the time the incident occurs. If the former, they believe that the proposal should be reconsidered in light of the costs and disruptive effects that would result, and that, in any event, the nature, timing, and duration of the prepositioning envisaged by the proposal should be indicated.

h. In order to avoid any implication that the consideration of reconnaissance flights for other purposes connotes a reduced need for their intelligence contribution, a statement should be made at an appropriate point reemphasizing the requirement to conduct aerial reconnaissance for the purpose of insuring an adequate flow of information for intelligence purposes.

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i. In view of the gravity of the matter, more detailed analysis should be made of the question of U.S. -U.S.S.R. confrontations likely to result from the proposal in Cuba and elsewhere, the impact of possible Soviet reactions upon the time phasing proposed, the possibility of escalation, and the capability of U.S. forces to cope with simultaneous crises.

4. It is recommended that the Contingency Plan be revised in accordance with the foregoing, and made available for further review when revised.


A. J. GOODPASTER
Major General, USA
Spec. Asst. to Chairman
Joint Chiefs of Staff

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